

REMARKS

As an initial matter, Applicant appreciates the Examiner's reconsideration and withdrawal the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 101 and 112, second paragraph, and the continued indication that claims 6, 9, 14, 19, 41, 44, 49, and 51 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of their corresponding independent claims and any intermediate, dependent claims. Final Office Action at 6.

By this Amendment After Final, Applicant has amended claims 1, 13, 15, 19, 36, 48, and 51, such that claims 14, 19, 49, and 51 have been rewritten in independent form. In particular, independent claim 1 has been rewritten to include the subject matter recited in dependent claims 12 and 14; claim 19 has been rewritten in independent form, including the subject matter previously recited in independent claim 1 and dependent claim 18; independent claim 36 has been rewritten to include the subject matter recited in dependent claims 47 and 49; and dependent claim 51 has been rewritten in independent form, including the subject matter previously recited in independent claim 36 and dependent claim 50. No new matter has been added. Thus, independent claims 1, 19, 36, and 51 should be allowable. Furthermore, Applicant has canceled claims 12, 14, 47, 49, 64-66, and 69-71 without prejudice or disclaimer.¹

¹ Applicant continues to believe that independent claims 1, 36, and 64-66, along with their respective dependent claims are allowable without amendment for at least the reasons outlined in the Request for Reconsideration filed February 16, 2006. Moreover, Applicant's claim amendments should not be misconstrued as an implicit agreement with the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) claim rejection based on Goncalves (U.S. Patent No. 5,209,565) in combination with alleged "admitted prior art" and Spielman (U.S. Patent No. 3,941,270). Rather, Applicant has made the above-outlined amendments in the interest of expediting prosecution of this application, which was originally filed in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on January 4, 2002.

The above-outlined amendments should not require further consideration by the Examiner at least because the final Office Action indicates that those amendments would result in the claims being allowable. Final Office Action at 6. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests entry of these amendments and allowance of amended independent claims 1, 19, 36, and 51.

Conclusion

For at least the reasons set forth above, independent claims 1, 19, 36, and 51 should be allowable. Dependent claims 2-11, 13, 15-18, 20-35, 37-46, 48, 50, 52-63, 67, and 68 each ultimately depend from one of independent claims 1 and 36. Consequently, those dependent claims should be allowable for at least the same reasons their corresponding independent claim is allowable.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of the outstanding claim rejection, and allowance of claims 1-11, 13, 15-46, 48, 50-63, 67, and 68.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation might advance prosecution, the Examiner is cordially invited to call Applicant's undersigned attorney at (571) 203-2739.

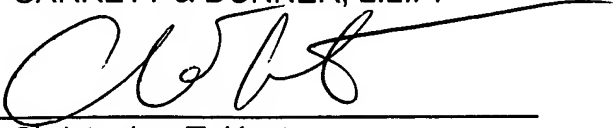
Applicant respectfully submits that the final Office Action contains assertions concerning the related art and the claims of the present application. Regardless of whether those assertions are addressed specifically herein, Applicant respectfully declines to necessarily subscribe to them.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge
any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 6-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: August 2, 2006

By: 
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